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REVIEW OF BELORUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS
AT 20TH REPUBLIC PARTY CONGRESS

The following information on the progress of agriculture in the Belorussian SSR is from a report given on 20 September 1952 by N. S. Petolichav, secretary of the TsK KP(b) Belorussian SSR, to the 20th Congress of the KP(b) Belorussian SSR.

General

The period covered by this report [apparently 1 January 1949 to mid-1952] has been characterized by an uninterrupted expansion in the collectivized agriculture of the republic. Extensive aid from party and government and hard work by kolkhoz, sovkhoz, and MTS workers have overcome the difficulties created by the fascist occupation. The situation is now favorable for the solution of the chief problems facing agriculture -- increased crop yields, increased collectivized livestock herds and animal productivity, and increased gross and commercial production from these two basic types of agricultural activity.

Although some party oblast and rayon committees have not provided agricultural workers adequate guidance and leadership, the following progress has been made in the period covered by this report:

Peasant households in the western oblasts have been virtually collectivized in full. Consolidation of smaller kolkhozes has been completed in the eastern oblasts and continues in the western oblasts. As of 1 January 1949, there were 9,772 kolkhozes in the eastern oblasts; as of 1 July 1952, this number had decreased to 3,153. The consolidated kolkhozes have three times the number of households, able-bodied workers, and amount of arable land available to them before consolidation.

During this same period, the total sown area in kolkhozes of the republic has increased by 2,042,000 hectares, including an increase of 444,000 hectares in kolkhozes of the eastern oblasts. From 1 January 1949 to 1 August 1952,

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the number of livestock on kolkhozes increased as follows: cattle 150 percent, including cows 360 percent, hogs 490 percent, sheep and goats 250 percent, fowl 100 percent, and horses 180 percent. As of 1 August 1952, kolkhoz collectivized livestock herds had increased over 1940 as follows: cattle 62 percent, hogs 100 percent. All oblasts of the republic had more of all types of productive livestock than in the prewar period.

Kolkhoz indivisible funds and the volume of capital investment in collectivized agriculture have increased considerably in recent years. Throughout the postwar period and including the period covered by this report, the state has aided agriculture to improve mechanization, swamp drainage, consolidation of kolkhozes, and training of cadres. During the last 3 years (1949-1951), 41 MTS, 15 MMS (Mechanized Land Improvement Stations), 3 LMS (Pasture Improvement Stations), and 200 mechanized land improvement detachments in MTS have been set up in the republic. During this period the MTS tractor park has more than doubled, and the number of combines has increased 15 times. The volume of capital investment in MTS totaled 627 million rubles for the last 3 years.

Crops and Agricultural Techniques

During the period covered by this report, the area sown to grains and pulses in the republic increased, and is now 100.5 percent of 1940. The area sown to winter and spring wheat in kolkhozes increased 130.4 percent, to fiber flax 92 percent, to potatoes 50 percent, and to fodder crops 270 percent. At present, the total sown area in kolkhozes is distributed as follows: grains and pulses 73.1 percent; industrial crops 7.9 percent; potatoes, vegetables, and cucurbits 11.4 percent; and fodder crops 8 percent. Future plans for distribution of the total sown area must lay greater emphasis on those crops best suited to Belorussia, such as wheat, flax, hemp, potatoes, vegetables, and perennial and annual grasses. Although acreages have increased, crop yields are still low on many kolkhozes. The Fifth Five-Year Plan calls for higher crop yields in kolkhozes of the non-chernozem zone as follows: grains up to 17-19 quintals per hectare, flax fiber 4.5-5.5 quintals per hectare, and potatoes 155-175 quintals per hectare.

Crop rotation is particularly important in the republic, and must be introduced at a more rapid pace. As of 1 August 1952 crop rotation had been introduced on 1,943 of 5,929 kolkhozes in the republic. By the end of this year, it must be introduced in 1,000 more kolkhozes. By the end of 1953, this practice must be introduced in all kolkhozes of the eastern oblasts, and in all consolidated kolkhozes of the western oblasts. The TsK KP(b) Belorussian SSR has been responsible for the unsatisfactory progress in introduction of crop rotation. The Minskaya, Vitebskaya, and Mogilevskaya oblast committees have failed to organize this work properly. Other local party organs also lag in this work. The Ministry of Agriculture Belorussian SSR has failed to impress its specialists with the urgency of this task.

Fertilizer application must be improved. In 1952, 13,917,000 metric tons of manure and 11,977,000 metric tons of peat were applied to fields. This was two to three times the amount applied in 1948, 1949, and 1950. Much still remains to be done in this line; many people still contest the necessity of widespread fertilizer application, particularly the use of peat, on kolkhoz fields. However, mechanization of basic field work has now reached a point where further increases in crop yields and in the gross harvest are largely contingent on proper and timely application of manure and peat, liming of acid soils, and increased sowings of lupine for fertilizer.

The decisions of the February 1946 Plenary Session of the TsK VKP(b) regarding exclusive use of selected seed in kolkhozes have not yet been fulfilled

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in the republic. In 1952, 40.5 percent of the area sown to spring grains was sown with selected seed; comparable figures for winter grains were 62.5 percent, and for flax 45.3 percent. The organization of seed selection and storage work in kolkhozes and rayon seed centers is completely unsatisfactory. Many kolkhozes make no provision for their own seed stocks, and depend on outside aid. The 1952 crop yields were high, and made it possible for each kolkhoz to store an adequate quantity of seed for its own use. In good years every kolkhoz should be able to store a sufficient amount of quality seed to fulfill its winter and spring crop acreage plans, and to lay aside reserve stocks for the future.

Year after year, only half the area sown to spring crops in the republic is sown on winter fallow. Shallow plowing of stubble is also neglected. Row sowing of winter and spring crops is not practiced as extensively as is possible with the existing number of "row-seeders" in kolkhozes and MMS. Time schedules, particularly those for seeding, are not met, and care for crops already in the ground, particularly industrial crops, is rarely on schedule. The fields of many kolkhozes are choked with weeds. All these shortcomings lead to low yields. The TsK KP(b) Belorussian SSR has not fulfilled the directives of the TsK VKP(b) concerning the improvement of agricultural techniques. The Minskaya, Vitebskaya, Mogilevskaya, Polotskaya, and Gomel'skaya oblast committees and the Ministry of Agriculture Belorussian SSR are chiefly responsible for this failure.

Kolkhozes of the republic have at their disposal 1.5 million hectares which are covered with brush and scrub growth, and 900,000 more hectares choked with stones. Full utilization of available machinery and observance of proper agricultural techniques hinge on clearing this land. Unfortunately, many workers and local authorities have closed their eyes to this fact, and only a beginning has been made toward a solution of this problem. In 1951 and 1952, 217,000 hectares have been cleared of brush and 70,000 hectares of stones.

Drainage of marsh and swampland must be speeded up in the republic. The 15 MMS recently established have been equipped with the latest machines for draining swampland, and this work can now be undertaken on a broad scale in literally every oblast in the republic. However, little is actually being accomplished in this line, and the Ministries of Land Improvement and Agriculture must expand their activity in land improvement work as well as in peat extraction. The Poles'ye Lowlands are to be drained during the Fifth Five-Year Plan and turned into an agriculturally productive region. This region, with a total area of 4.6 million hectares, includes all of Pinskaya, Poleskaya, and parts of Bobruyskaya, Brestskaya, Baranovichskaya, Gomel'skaya, and Minskaya oblasts, as well as several oblasts in the Ukrainian SSR. Utilization of this area, which will be very fertile after drainage, will permit a sharp increase in the harvest of grains, hemp, flax fiber, makhorka, and hay, as well as an increase in meat, milk, and wool production. Favorable conditions will be established for a considerable growth of the food, local, and fuel industries in the region.

To sum up, the Fifth Five-Year Plan calls for increased production of those crops which grow best under local conditions, such as winter and spring wheat, flax, hemp, sugar beets, and makhorka. The production of vegetables and potatoes must also be sharply increased, particularly in suburban areas, and especially around Minsk.

Animal Husbandry

Serious shortcomings hinder the further development of collectivized animal husbandry in Belorussian SSR kolkhozes and sovkhoses. The Fifth Five-Year Plan contains sections dealing with increasing herds and raising animal productivity. Such plans are within the present capabilities of republic kolkhozes, providing these capabilities are properly utilized. There have been large losses of

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collectivized livestock due to epidemics (padezh), slaughter, and squandering. In some cases annual losses exceed annual gains. Such was the case in kolkhozes of Vitebskaya, Gomel'skaya, and Mogilevskaya oblasts in the winter of 1950 - 1951. Another serious shortcoming is the low proportion of mature female stock in the collectivized herds. At present, mature cows constitute only 25.8 percent of the total number of cattle on kolkhozes, whereas they should constitute 40 to 45 percent of all cattle. In Poleskaya Oblast, cows constitute 19.5 percent, and in Bobruyskaya Oblast 24.6 percent of all cattle.

Little has been done to increase the number of purebred livestock. As of 1 January 1952, the proportion of purebred cattle to total cattle in kolkhozes of the republic was 22.9 percent; similar figures for sheep and hogs were 48.1 and 38.3 percent, respectively. The productivity of collectivized herds is very low, and in many kolkhozes animal husbandry does not bring in the planned amount of income. In 1951, income from collectivized animal husbandry accounted for only 17 percent of total kolkhoz income.

Livestock numbers and animal productivity must be increased during the coming years. One of the main prerequisites for such increases is more fodder. A considerable portion of the republic's pasture and meadowland is overgrown with brush or is swampy. Consequently, hay yields are low, reaching 10-12 quintals per hectare only in the best years. Not enough area has been devoted to sown grasses, fodder root crops, and silage crops. Work toward establishing a stable fodder base in the republic must be organized so as to overcome these shortcomings. The pace of livestock shelter construction must be speeded so that in 1953 all stock will be housed in standard shelters.

An army of kolkhoz workers is occupied with collectivized animal husbandry. Most of them are familiar with and interested in their work. However, in many kolkhozes their work is poorly organized and they are not adequately paid. Party workers must concentrate on overcoming these shortcomings, and on raising the morale and increasing the qualifications of livestock farm workers. Labor-consuming work in animal husbandry must be further mechanized, and veterinary and acotechnical services must be improved.

Kolkhoz Organization

In 1951, kolkhozes of the republic delivered to the state 70.5 percent more grain, 24.8 percent more potatoes, 65.4 percent more flax fiber, 173.4 percent more meat, 96 percent more milk, and 283.4 percent more wool than in 1948. However, much still remains to be done to raise the income of kolkhozes and kolkhoz workers. Party organizations must supervise kolkhoz capital investments, particularly those concerned with construction of animal shelters, land improvement installations, water reservoirs, field shelter belts, and kolkhoz hydroelectric stations, and with land clearing. It is necessary to develop collectivized agriculture to the point where considerably larger payments can be made to kolkhoz workers. It is absolutely imperative to avoid low payment for workdays due to poor supervision by kolkhoz officials. Some rayon leaders consider such a situation normal and do little to correct it.

The consolidation of kolkhozes has brought the basic problem of kolkhoz organization and wage payments to the fore. Many village party organizations, particularly in the western oblasts, have ignored this problem. They have failed to draw a considerable portion of the kolkhoz workers into collectivized work, ignoring the great political and economic significance of this problem. This year, when the TsK KP(b) Belorussian SSR reviewed the reports of the Grodnenskaya, Molodechnenskaya, Pinskaya, and Brestskaya oblast committees concerning kolkhoz organization, a great number of shortcomings were evident. The production brigade has not been established as the basic form of kolkhoz work organization in

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these oblasts. A considerable part of the kolkhozes of Minskaya, Vitebskaya, Mogilevskaya, and other oblasts organize their work poorly, and do not conduct it on schedule; this results in low harvests. The customary excuse is lack of manpower or equipment, but in most cases the real cause is low labor productivity. These shortcomings must be corrected.

The party has always attached prime importance to the selection and training of kolkhoz supervisory cadres. In connection with the consolidation of kolkhozes, the party has moved 527 agricultural specialists with higher or secondary education, and 1,925 "practical workers," all party and soviet activists, into supervisory positions on kolkhozes. However, the work of securing better kolkhoz chairmen is being carried on in a completely unsatisfactory manner, and must be improved.

Violations of the Kolkhoz Charter still persist in kolkhozes of the republic; they include misappropriation of kolkhoz land and other property, and encroachments on the democratic basis of kolkhoz administration. Entirely too much laxity is shown by party and soviet organizations toward such conduct; even some rayon committee secretaries, chairmen of rayon executive committees, and procurators have plundered kolkhoz property. For example, Kovalenko, first secretary of the Lel'chitskiy Rayon Committee, and other workers have been removed from their positions and expelled from the party for such conduct. Party workers must be vigilant in preventing violations of the Kolkhoz Charter, and in punishing those who commit such violations.

MTS

The degree of mechanization of basic agricultural work has more than doubled since 1940. The total volume of tractor work performed by republic MTS increases every year. In 1948, MTS performed 3,279,900 hectares of soft plowing; and in 1951, this figure was 7,181,300 hectares. Much work has also been done on improving MTS repair bases.

In 1949, 1,023 agronomists were at work on republic MTS, and at present this figure is 1,508 comparable figures for mechanics are 1,033 and 2,282. The shortage of technical personnel in agriculture has caused the creation of a Mechanization Faculty in the Belorussian Agricultural Academy, and a Agricultural Mechanization Department in the Polytechnical Institute imeni Stalin. The republic government has further decided to set up an Agricultural Mechanization Institute in Minsk, construction on which will begin in 1953, as well as two other tekhnikums and 13 agricultural schools.

Many MTS, such as the Uvarovichskaya, Surazhskaya, Belevichskaya, and Lyubchanskaya, are turning in model performances. However, the party and government are repeatedly criticized for the poor performances turned in by the majority of republic MTS. Both government and kolkhoz workers are criticized, and such criticism is completely justified. The plan for tractor work by republic MTS has repeatedly not been fulfilled. In 1950, MTS fulfilled the tractor work plan 94.1 percent; in 1951, 93.6 percent. The annual amount of work performed per tractor in 1950 was 381 hectares [of soft plowing], in 1951, 363 hectares.

The chief task of MTS workers, like that of all agricultural workers, is to rise crop yields and animal productivity. The many instances of neglect of the quality of work, such as shallow plowing, spotty plowing, plowing without colters, and faulty row-sowing, etc., that have come to light are altogether intolerable and must be eliminated. Many MTS directors concentrate on achieving as many hectares of soft plowing as possible at the expense of quality work and types of work with low conversion factors. MTS supervisory cadres have not yet been adequately improved, and many undesirable and incompetent people occupy these important positions.

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The Fifth Five-Year Plan calls for complete mechanization of basic field work in the republic. This work has been progressing swiftly, but work on such labor-consuming crops as potatoes and vegetables is very poorly mechanized. At the same time, these crops are neglected in a whole series of rayons and oblasts because of a scarcity of manpower.

Sovkhoses

During the period covered by this report, sovkhos capabilities and production have both increased. In 1951, sovkhoses gave the state 187.8 percent more meat and 157 percent more milk than in 1948. However, a considerable number of sovkhoses are performing in an unsatisfactory manner. Crop yields and animal productivity are low, machinery is not properly utilized, and state plans for increasing labor productivity and lowering costs are not fulfilled. In 1951, only 35 of 74 sovkhoses made a profit at the end of the fiscal year. The Ministry of State Farms Belorussian SSR has not adequately supervised its sovkhoses, well as an extensive program of construction of living quarters and cultural-recreational facilities for sovkhos workers.

Preliminary 1952 Data

Some preliminary 1952 data may be given at this time. Kolkhozes, sovkhoses, and MTS fulfilled the plan for sowing early spring spiked grains 20 days earlier than in 1951. The area sown to wheat was considerably extended, and the area planned for sowing to spiked grains and pulses was exceeded. The level of agromanure and peat were applied to spring crops than in 1951, and the area of row-sowing was considerably increased.

This year, the republic has assumed the obligation to fulfill the grain delivery plan ahead of time, to guarantee each kolkhoz its own seed supply, and considerably to increase payments in kind for workdays. Furthermore, livestock herds must be increased, as well as the delivery of animal products to the state. Agricultural officials must not be content with successes gained thus far. Many serious mistakes and shortcomings still persist in the supervision of agricultural work. Much of this year's work remains incomplete: the harvest is not all in, sowing of winter crops is not complete, plowing of winter fallow must be speeded, the 1952 plan for increase of collectivized hogs and fowl has not been fulfilled, the haying and ensilage plans are far from complete, and not enough sown grasses and fodder root crops are available.

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